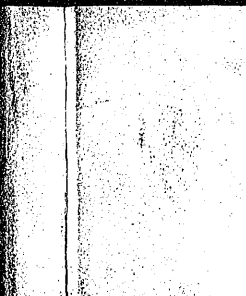


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CHRISTIAN LIFE PROBLEMS

FOR

YOUNG PEOPLES' CLASSES AND SOCIETIES

HARRY THOMAS STOCK

Young People's Secretary of the
Congregational Education Society



per

THE PILGRIM PRESS

BOSTON

CHICAGO



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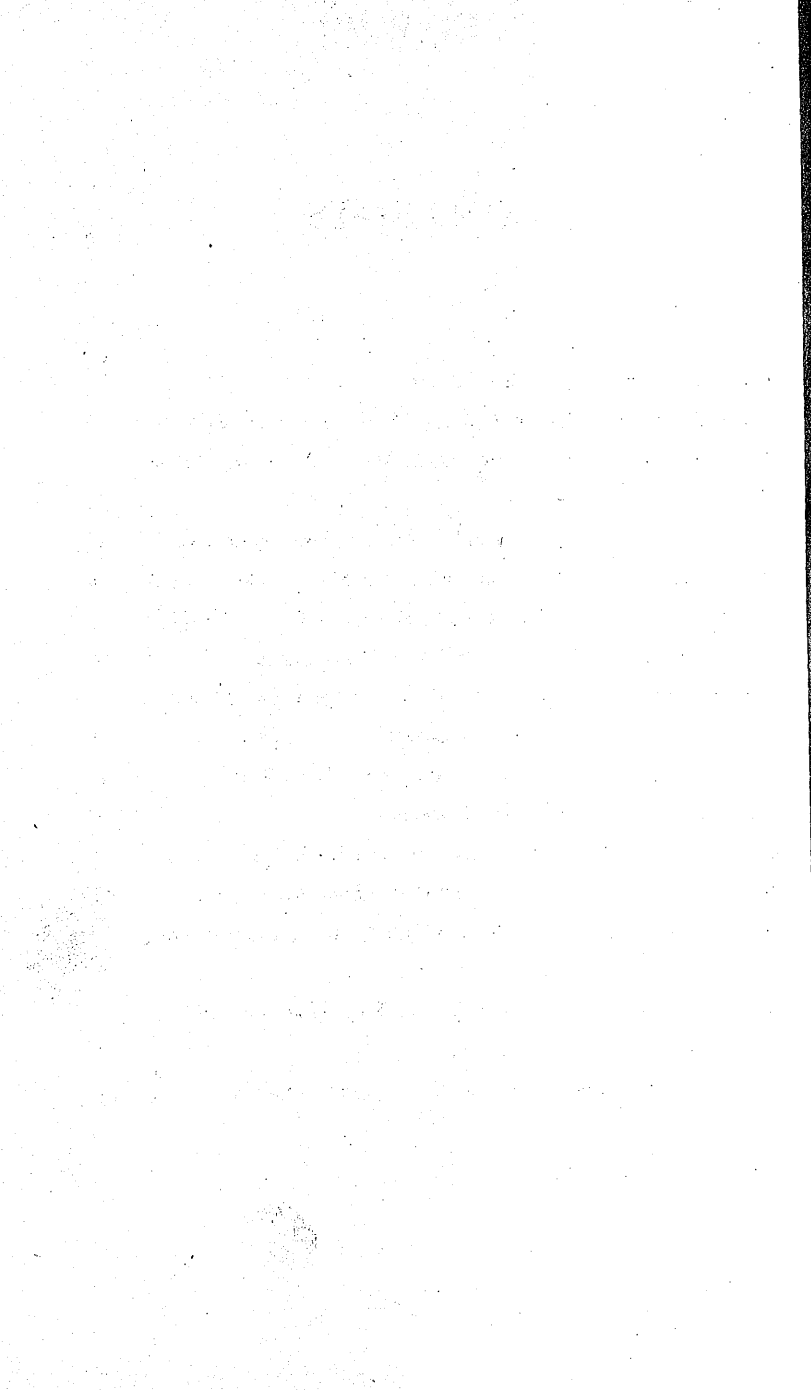
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Foreword

HOW TO USE THESE OUTLINES

For Whom Intended

This booklet is prepared primarily for young people of the high school age and for their adult leaders. While intended for Seniors and Young People, most of the outlines may be used by Intermediates, if the adult leader (teacher or counselor) makes proper adaptation of the materials and provides sufficient help for those who are to participate in the discussions.

The suggestions are so arranged as to be useful for societies, classes, and free discussion groups.

When Used in a Class

It is expected that teachers will make it possible—and necessary—for the young people to do most of the talking. This means that the teacher should be at work on a plan at least five or six days in advance. Specific assignments should be made to members of the group that far ahead, especially in those cases where real study or investigation is desired. All members of the class should be expected to make some preparation, either upon individual assignments or upon a single phase of the problem. It will be of great help if every member of the group is provided with one of these booklets.

When Used in a Society or Club

What has been said of the need of early preparation on the part of the teacher applies also in the case of the leader of a society meeting. Except in those cases where the young people are rather mature and self-confident, the leader should go over the plan of the meeting with an adult—preferably the regularly chosen adult counselor—a week before the meeting; otherwise it will be difficult to secure the proper preparation on the part of the rest of

the members. If it is not possible to have a copy of this booklet for every member of the group, there should be at least from six to ten in a society. These should be passed around from week to week to those members who, on particular Sundays, have major responsibility for introducing discussions.

The Function of the Teacher

The teacher of young people is not a preacher, exhorter, or lecturer. He is a member of the group and joins with the others in the double rôle of learning and teaching. He must be open-minded; he must respect the opinions of others. He should not monopolize the time; he will be more successful if he does only enough talking to draw out the young people themselves, to set them thinking, to guide them along the salient lines, to suggest considerations not apparent, and to help them to come to reasonable conclusions. He should offer his opinions when asked for them, but there should be no dogmatism or finality in his attitude. Unless some young person can do it better, he should be responsible for summarizing the day's discussion and for indicating the connection with the next week's program.

The Adult in the Society or Club

It is customary for societies and clubs to have at least one adult counselor. He will be in the background, although his opinion should frequently be sought by the young people. With younger groups he will be expected to take more initiative, offering suggestions more freely and giving more minute attention to details of planning. It is wise for the adult to do most of his work before the meeting. His great opportunity is that of coaching the leader; if he is prominent during the discussion period he may embarrass the person in charge, and it is likely that many of the members will feel under restraint. In helping the leader to plan the meeting, he should not try to predetermine the trend of the argument, nor should he relieve the leader of the responsibility of outlining the major items of the program. He may point out alternatives, indicating various issues which may come up and which need to be watched, prepared for, and guided. His function is that of showing the leader how he may prepare.

During the conference hour he may be present in the capacity of "resource material"—that is, he may be asked to contribute

information at various points. The young people should realize that he probably has more information than they have, and that they should avail themselves of that wider knowledge and experience. Often, the group will expect him to summarize the viewpoints presented and to offer closing suggestions. He should do this entirely in the spirit of "being one of them"—not as a person of superior wisdom.

The Conference or Discussion Method

There are at least four weaknesses in discussions as carried on in our young people's groups. The first is *lack of preparation*. There is no excuse for this, if the leader is "on the job" early and if the material is made available to the group.

The second weakness appears when *every one talks about everything without knowing very much about anything*. Frequently, the reason is that the subjects under consideration are beyond the range of present experience.

It is true, in the third place, that many discussions *do not "arrive"*; time is wasted over side issues; the meeting degenerates into controversy over small matters. The leader should hold the participants to the main issue. Secondary matters should be noted on the blackboard in a separate column; these may be referred to later if there is time, or they may form the topics for other sessions. Make a careful use of the blackboard in all meetings. The summary at the close should help the group "to arrive"—not that they will always agree, but that the issues should be clear enough for each person to make his own decisions intelligently.

The fourth weakness is that so often *"nothing happens" after the meeting*. Discussion is good mental exercise, but the purpose of a class or society session goes beyond that. The idea is to help build up Christian character and to secure right social action. Discussion which comes in naturally as a part of a project is more vital than discussion which is an end in itself. But even where the group is not engaged in a project covering study and activity extending over several weeks, it is possible to have definite practical results from the meeting; and this should always be expected. A project may grow out of a discussion as well as involve discussion in its later processes. The value of a meeting is proved when, as a result of it, something worth while happens!

Beginning with the Concrete

It is hoped that leaders will not take this booklet too seriously. The outlines provided are definite; they show one way in which a particular meeting may be conducted. But in almost every case, there is a better way for your particular group. Use as much of the outline as applies in your local situation. Rearrange the material, rephrase the subjects, change the order of the topics used; do not lean too heavily upon the printed page. Wherever it is possible, begin with specific local "cases" or incidents with which your group is familiar. Approach the discussion from the concrete; work up to general principles.

A Program Committee

In the class or society it is well to have a committee who shall decide from week to week what issues are to be considered. At the beginning of the quarter it should decide which of the chapters to use and the order in which they shall be used. From week to week, it may recommend changes. It is quite possible, for example, that on a given Sunday the group will become engrossed in the subject under consideration and discover at the end of the meeting that the study of the issues involved is not nearly finished. In such a case it would be a serious error to leave the matter just because "we have another topic for next Sunday night," and the committee should recommend that next week's theme be postponed for a later meeting.

A Single Request

The author will appreciate the sending to him, by leaders and young people, of very definite criticisms of subjects, methods, and materials. This will be of assistance in preparing suitable discussion material in the future.

H. T. S.

14 Beacon Street
Boston, Massachusetts

School Problems

IMPORTANT PROBLEMS WE FACE IN OUR SCHOOL LIFE

Preparing for the Meeting

The leader may arrange for the following reports: 1. A senior or graduate may tell what the five most serious school temptations are. 2. A teacher or the principal may tell (either in the meeting or in an interview with the leader) what the five most serious problems are, viewed from the faculty standpoint. 3. The leader may in advance ask five students to name the five most serious problems; these should be placed on the blackboard.

THE MEETING

The Leader's Approach. He may emphasize—It is better to look ahead at our problems than to meet them unprepared and then look back in sorrow. We should learn from our failures, and from the successes and failures of others.

The Discussion

1. The report of the senior or graduate. (Put the points on the blackboard.)
2. The report of the teacher or principal. (List the points.)
3. The summary of the leader's questions put to the five or more students. (Add to the blackboard list.)
4. Ask the whole group to add still other problems. These may be of two kinds: (a) general, such as snobbishness; (b) specific, such as a particular case in which students showed poor sportsmanship.
5. Let the group decide which problems they will discuss in detail—those that affect the largest number.

Below are given sample outlines which may guide the discussion of certain problems. Do not begin with these, unless they are the subjects you need most.

1. *How to Select Our Courses.*

How do students select them? Do they take those (a) which are "snaps"; (b) that are "practical"—which ones are? (c) that give a broad foundation of knowledge and culture—which ones? (d) that teach you to think—which ones? (e) that are given by a favorite teacher; (f) which their parents advise; (g) for which their friends register; (h) which cover a wide range—"take a little of everything"; (i) which will give a great deal of information in one line—"specialize in one subject." Discuss each of these. List them in the order of their usefulness. Just exactly how should a student decide what courses he will take? Whose advice is best?

2. *How Hard Should We Study?*

(a) How important are grades? (b) With what grade should we be satisfied—70, 85, 95, 100, "the best that we can do, nothing less"? (c) What does your group think of the "greasy grind"? Is he really getting the most out of school? (d) Of the "flunker"? Is it a disgrace to fail—in one study, in two, in three? (e) Of the "average student"?

Have the following passages read. What meaning do they have at this point? 2 Tim. 2:15a; Eph. 5:15, 16; Phil. 3:13, 14.

Discuss the following statements: (a) Later in life the "flunker" will never do anything exceptionally well. (b) Many a poor student has made a success of life. (c) Yes, but he would have been more successful if he had done his school work well. (d) During our 'teens we form habits that we can't break. (e) "It is just as easy to set up good habits as bad ones."¹ (f) We ought to have self-respect enough not to do shabby work. (g) A university professor says the student attitude is this: "The thing to do is to make the four years as cheerful as possible, avoid too much hard labor, get a sheepskin, and begin the great bluff."² (h) A student expresses it thus: "I just want to graduate and get through and make good without wasting my time on books, and I guess I will get through in the pinches all right."³ (i) Decide how to correct faults in your habits of study.

1 W. B. Selbie, *The Student Movement*, 28: 173.

2 R. W. Brown, *The Creative Spirit*, 106. Copyright—Harper & Brothers. Used by permission.

3 Archer Winsten, *Harper's*, 153: 324.

3. *How Much Time Shall We Give to Outside Activities?*

Discuss the following: (a) Just what is the main purpose of an education? (b) Do we give too much time to unimportant matters? (c) Do "students leave uncontaminated by thought"?¹ (d) Was this remark of President Hopkins of Dartmouth justified? "I wonder how many of you have ever undergone the painful process of having a thought." (e) "Friendships are more important than courses; so, above all things, make friends." (f) Learning to do things is more important than learning facts; so "get into everything." (g) We are in school to study; that is our main job. (h) Outside activities should be limited. If so, how? Should a certain high grade be demanded before a student may be elected to any office? What grade? How much time a week should a student spend in studying; in outside activities? Which of your outside activities are most worth while—athletics, dramatics, social clubs, etc? Decide just how to divide your time.

Discuss the statement of Fielding H. Yost, of the University of Michigan: "Self-confidence, self-control, alertness, obedience, friendliness, leadership, resourcefulness, decision, mental and moral poise are the result (of football). It is character-building of the finest sort."² Does football develop character better than studying does? Are football players better morally than "honor students" who do not play?

4. *The Main Faults of Students.*

What are they? Discuss these answers: (a) Teachers at the University of Pennsylvania say "laziness";³ (b) Lack of concentration.⁴

5. *What Ideals Should We Seek to Develop?*

Consider these: integrity, good will, fair play, right living, scholarship, use of all one's powers.⁵ What "Christian virtues"? Study: Prov. 6:16-19; Phil. 4:8, 9; Matt. 5:3-11.

Concluding the Meeting

Consider whether you want to continue this discussion next week. If not, be sure that you have found the right way of solving at least one serious problem.

¹ Quoted in *The Nation*, April 11, 1923.

² *Liberty*, February 12, 1927.

³ *Boston Herald*, August 18, 1926.

⁴ *American Magazine*, 97: 53.

⁵ See *Christian Century*, September 23, 1926, p. 1174.

Our Friendships

HOW CAREFUL SHOULD WE BE ABOUT OUR FRIENDSHIPS?

Preparing for the Meeting

Have two committees, of three members each, study the following questions: (1) Are there any young people in our church or neighborhood who have no real friends? (2) Are there groups or cliques within our church that ought to show more friendliness to those outside their number?

THE MEETING

The Leader's Approach. He may call attention to the fact that many friendships just "happen"—we do not set out to win particular friends. Two dangers in this method need to be faced: (1) We may become too chummy with people who will have a bad influence over us. (2) We may ignore others who need our friendship most and whose comradeship we ourselves need.

The Discussion

The following Scripture passages may be assigned to members for study and report. What do they have to do with the subject? Matt. 26: 36-45; John 13: 21-30; Eph. 2: 19-22.

1. Discuss this statement: *We Should be a Friend to Everybody.* The following points may be considered; decide which of them are true, which untrue, and which need to be modified or qualified: (a) Jesus was a friend to all kinds of people. (See Luke 7: 34.) (b) That was all right for Jesus; he was able to help these people, but they will injure us and we cannot do them much good. (c) Suppose a boy is known to be a leader of a "tough crowd." Should a Christian boy be as friendly with him as with the president of the church school class? (d) If not, what should be the Christian's attitude? (e) What should be the attitude of a Christian girl toward him? Should she "go

out with him," just speak to him, or "cut him cold"? (f) Is the proverb true: "One rotten apple in a barrel will spoil the whole barrel"? (g) How is the boy with a bad reputation going to be reformed? Who is responsible for doing it?

What should be the attitude of other girls to a girl—(a) Who "hangs on like a leech"—you can't get rid of her; who imposes upon you and becomes a nuisance? (b) Who does not want to make friends, but keeps to herself, and refuses invitations to parties? (c) Who is uncultured, dresses in poor taste, and gives all evidences of belonging to a "lower caste"? (d) Who is the only Negro member of your high school class?

Discuss the report of the committee on the question, Are there any young people in your church or neighborhood who lack friends? Do not leave this point until you have decided upon a course, if there is one, which will solve the problem.

Are the following statements true, or do they exaggerate? (a) "It's fun to make a fortune; it's fun to make an education; but most of all it's fun to make a friend." (b) "When a man's heart really opens to a friend he finds there room for two, and when he takes in the second, the skies lift, and the earth grows wider, and he finds there room for two more."

2. Discuss: *What Are the Different Degrees of Friendship?* (a) Did Jesus have different degrees of friendship? For example, there was a difference between his friendships with Zaccheus and with Peter. (b) What do you think of the statement, "A Christian must love everybody but he doesn't have to like everybody"? Must he love everybody? Can he? Must he like everybody? Can he? (c) Discuss: "We should find that we really liked those whom we now dislike the most, if we only became better acquainted with them."

What are the various degrees of friendship? For example: (a) An acquaintance. What is our duty to him? (b) A friend. What makes a person worthy to be called a friend? How well do we have to know him? (c) A chum. What is the difference here? (d) A "special friend." How many such will a person be likely to have? Just exactly how careful ought a Christian to be before he allows himself to become a chum or a "special friend"?

3. Discuss: *Just How Do Intimate Friendships Often Hurt Others?* Consider one or more of the following cases: (a) Mrs.

Thomas said, "The girls in Caroline's Sunday school class are friendly to her there, but they don't speak to her on the street." Are there cases like that? Why does it happen? What is likely to be the result? (b) In a certain Christian Endeavor society, one of the leading parts in a play was given to a girl who is not a member of a little clique, who is not a "social butterfly," but who is competent. The "inner circle" of girls tried various ways to have the part taken away from her and given to a member of their little group. Suppose that happened in your society. What would be your duty if you heard about it? (c) A girl who belonged to a sorority often walked across the campus with a Jewish girl. The president of the sorority told her she would have to stop it, because it wasn't good for the reputation of the group for her to be friendly with a Jewess. What should this girl do?

If fraternities and sororities exist in your school, discuss their good and bad points. Do not argue for the sake of argument; try to find a way of solving any bad situations.

Discuss the report of the committee on the question, Are there groups or cliques within our church that ought to be more friendly to those outside their number? Be frank, but maintain a fine Christian spirit in your discussion.

Concluding the Meeting

The teacher, leader, or counselor should summarize the main conclusions that have been reached. If problems remain unsettled, assign them for future study and continue the study later. Out of this meeting should grow a plan by the social committee whereby members may become better "mixed," exclusive groups be broken up, and strangers and bashful people made to feel thoroughly at home, both at socials and at the regular meetings.

Sportsmanship

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN BEING A GOOD SPORTSMAN?

Preparing for the Meeting

(1) Have some one ask the coach to name six things that are true of a good sportsman, and six that a sportsman will not do. (2) Ask an athlete to come to the meeting and tell in ten minutes how a player feels about these points. (3) Assign to members the Bible passages given below for study and report.

THE MEETING

The Leader's Approach. Begin with the first two reports suggested above. List the suggestions on the blackboard. The leader may summarize what has been said and then discuss the definition of "sportsman": "One who in sports is fair and generous; one who has recourse to nothing illegitimate; a good loser and a graceful winner."¹

The Discussion

Further discussion of *the meaning of the term* may center around: (a) "A person who is not a good sport cannot be called a gentleman or a lady. The two are pretty much the same." (b) "There is not much difference between calling a person a Christian and a real sportsman. The principles of sportsmanship are almost the same as those which Jesus demanded of his disciples." (c) "The best definition of a sportsman is that he is a person who keeps the Golden Rule." Read Matt. 7: 12. (d) Reports on the following Bible passages, previously assigned. How does each apply to the subject under discussion? Matt. 26: 33, 35; Luke 22: 33; John 3: 26-30; 10: 11; 17: 19. (e) Does the following express your meaning at all? "The real right person" is one who has "good manners, good tastes, good sense, good nature, and good principles."²

¹ Webster's International Dictionary.

² The Mentor, January, 1927, p. 68.

Discuss various phases of sportsmanship under such headings as the following (add others):

1. *Fair Play.*

Is any characteristic more important than this? Can most young people be trusted to play fairly on the diamond? What per cent of them will cheat if they get a chance? Are we as honest off the gym floor as we are on it? If not, why not? Is one as important as the other? Discuss one or more of the following cases:

(a) George says that it is wrong to steal money but that it is all right to ask a girl to break her "date" with another fellow by telling him that her mother won't let her go out. What do the boys think? The girls?

(b) Ed and Fred both wanted to be manager of the dramatic club. A friend told Ed that "somebody told my brother that somebody told him" that Fred owed money to several merchants, and that he couldn't be trusted. What would Ed do if he were a good sport?

(c) Two boys like the same girl. Bill is always making slighting remarks about Frank; Frank never talks about Bill. What should the girl do: believe Bill, pay no attention to the remarks, tell Frank about it, quit going with one of them (which one?), tell Bill that he must stop talking about Frank?

(d) A new boy enters school and is interested in all kinds of activities. He is not good looking, does not dress well, and seems not to be of the "right kind." Shall you ignore him until he proves that there is something in him or be friendly until you know that he is going to have a bad influence on the crowd? Will a sportsman say, "We must be patient until we know him"?

2. *A Good Loser and a Graceful Winner.*

Are players better losers than rooters? Are they more sensible and humble in victory than those in the bleachers? Discuss:

(a) The high school team of L. had a bad season. They lost the "great game" to W. The principal praised the coach highly because he had such a fine moral influence on the boys and because he taught them to be good losers. "But he does not satisfy 'the people on the curbstone,' who demand victories. Therefore the coach must give way to some one who can produce

the one thing that will satisfy the citizens—victories.”¹ Discuss the issues involved.

(b) Every one wants to “pass” in school. The teacher is out of the room during examinations. What per cent of the pupils will cheat if they get a chance? Will most of the basketball players cheat? If they do, have they learned how to be sportsmen? How important is it to win grades? To lose standing? Will a good sport be willing to “take his medicine” in class as well as at play? If this is a serious problem in your school, do not leave this subject until you decide upon a plan for solving it.

3. *Following Leadership.*

Does the member of a team object to doing what the coach tells him? Has he a right to? Does he argue, “Nobody has a right to tell me what to do”? How is football different in this respect from the rest of the school program? Discuss: (a) Roger asked to be excused from the first scrimmage in order to go to a dance. He was kept on the bench all the season. When he protested, the coach said, “I’m saving you for the Junior Prom.” Was that fair?

(b) The fraternity was initiating freshmen. The committee told Phil to go up to a couple of strange girls and take their arms. He refused on the ground that it was not a gentlemanly thing to do. What about Phil’s loyalties? Ought he to have done it or was he right in being true to his “personal convictions”?

Other Discussion Points.

The importance of playing a team game, of not being selfish, of making personal sacrifices, of showing “school spirit” or “team spirit” or “Christian spirit.”

Concluding the Meeting

The teacher, leader, or counselor should point out some of the definite convictions upon which you have agreed. These should be related to the immediate school problems you face. Refer again to the importance of the Golden Rule as a general guide for all of our living.

¹ The Boston Post, February 4, 1927.

Fun

IS THERE ANYTHING WRONG WITH OUR MODERN IDEA OF FUN?

Preparing for the Meeting

A number of discussion points given below should be assigned to members in advance, for study and report. The leader should look up the definition of "fun" and "pleasure" in a comprehensive dictionary; watch the newspapers and report on the kinds of good times advertised or recorded there; observe young people to see what kinds of amusement and play seem to give them most pleasure.

THE MEETING

The Leader's Approach. Young people have a right to a good time; so have older people. It is important to develop habits of pleasure that really make us happy and that will increase the joy of living as we grow older. Most of us do not plan our fun; we jump into whatever comes along. This meeting should make us stop to look at ourselves. Out of it we ought to find ways of making life even more genuinely happy.

The Discussion

1. What are the *amusements which young people like best*? List those in which you engage: athletics, music, theatres, autoing, dances, other parties, reading, "pairing off" in couples, playing bridge, etc. Decide which of these appeal to young people most.
2. Discuss the reasons *why each of these is enjoyable*. Summarize these reasons on the blackboard. For example, it has been suggested that young people choose an amusement on such grounds as the following: (a) there must be "speed"; (b) it must involve activity; young people don't care for quiet kinds of fun; (c) it must "have a kick" or provide a thrill (just what does this

mean?); (d) if it is a little "shady" or "off color" it will get the biggest laugh; (e) it must be loud or hilarious; (f) it must not require much thinking; (g) if it requires thought it will be appreciated more; (h) young people prefer to have the entertainment provided by some one else; (i) they prefer to provide their own amusement. Add other suggestions.

3. Take the case of the *movies*. What is the reason that people go to see them so often? What do they do for a person? What kinds of movies appeal the most powerfully? Discuss the following: "Bess: How's the picture at the op'ry house this week? Tess: Great! three fights, two weddings, a forest fire, and a murder."¹ Are these the things that satisfy the most? Is this a good sign or a bad one?

4. Let three or four people come prepared to talk a few minutes on *One of the best times I ever had*. Then decide why these "best times" were so much better than other good times.

5. Compare the good times that a person will have by (a) going to see Harold Lloyd in a comedy; (b) attending a "kid party," at which every one dresses as though he were seven or eight years old, and at which the games are those of small children; (c) going to a summer conference; (d) watching a football game; (e) playing on a football team; (f) attending a high school dance which begins at nine o'clock and runs until two in the morning; (g) being a member of an automobile party of four, in which the members indulge in "petting."

6. Consider the following:

(a) Do young people find that it is fun listening over the radio? What kind of entertainment do they like best? Which of the following two statements seems to you to represent young people? Which one should be true? One girl said, "Oh dear, there's the symphony orchestra coming on. I'll have to go to sleep for an hour until the jazz program comes back." Another said: "I never knew the difference between jazz and classical music until we bought our radio. I'm getting more fun out of learning the fine old pieces than I am out of modern dance music."

(b) A newspaper writer compared the modern valentines with those of fifty years ago. He finds that those sold in 1927 are "snappy, unsentimental," whereas the old ones bore "tender
1 "The Line o'Type," in *The Chicago Tribune*, February 12, 1927.

messages." What do you think is the reason for this? Is it a good or a bad sign?

(c) In New York and Chicago, a number of young people, tired of the "fast" kinds of fun, want to return to the more quiet kinds of pleasure. They are organizing "slow clubs." This is the viewpoint of one of the young people who pleads for this return to the older type of amusements: "It isn't the bright lights we crave, but companionship, sociability such as 'slow clubs' might give. Let's have some old-fashioned parties at one another's homes, where girls bring the cakes and the men furnish the ice cream."¹ Discuss the ways in which the church can provide for such needs.

7. Discuss: In what ways is a *Christian good time different* from other kinds? Consider these statements: (a) If it builds up the mind and body it is Christian; otherwise it is not. (b) If you can imagine Jesus taking part in it, it is Christian. (c) If it makes it easier to control oneself, it is Christian.

8. Are there some things a *Christian must not do*? If so, what are they?

9. Do you think that a Christian can have *as good a time* as a non-Christian? Who seem happier—ministers or the fellows who spend their time in pool halls? Why?

10. Discuss the following passages: 1 Cor. 8: 9; 1 Cor. 10: 12-14.

Concluding the Meeting

The leader may suggest that the social committee take all the ideas which have been agreed upon and that they work out a program of social life for the department, class or society, which shall give the young people the most wholesome kind of fun. The closing point may be, there is a real difference between "recreation" and "dissipation." Have the definitions ready, and point out that a Christian good time will re-create; an un-Christian kind tears down.

1 The Chicago Daily News, February 14, 1927.

Laws

WHAT SHOULD BE OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD RULES AND LAWS?

Preparing for the Meeting

Ask three young people to prepare to report (in five minutes each) on: (1) How important rules are in a football game; the attitude players must have toward these rules. (2) Six laws that show how important law observance is; e. g., automobiles must stop when the red signal shows, parents must send children to school. (3) Half a dozen illustrations from the newspapers that show respect or disrespect for law.

THE MEETING

The Leader's Approach. People are saying that: (1) Americans are too careless in their attitude toward laws; (2) young people don't take rules and laws seriously; (3) unless we learn a new obedience to laws we shall have anarchy,—“life in America won't be worth the living.” The point of this meeting is to determine just what responsibility young people have for seeing that laws are obeyed.

The Discussion

1. Begin with the first report: How important are rules in a football game? (a) Is it true that “the rules make the game possible”? (b) Should every violation of the rules bring a penalty? (c) One coach says, “Always play a square game; never break a rule.” Another says, “Never break a rule unless you're sure you 'can get away with it'.” Which of the two coaches would you prefer to have as president of the bank in which you kept your savings for college? (d) Is there any difference between the rules in a game and the laws of the state?

2. Have the second report: illustrations of the importance of laws. (a) Just why are laws made? Give all the answers you

can think of. (b) Are laws made primarily for punishment or for protection? (c) Is it true that a law-breaker is unpatriotic? Why?

3. Have the third report: illustrations of law-breaking. Discuss each case, asking (a) How serious was this? (b) Why did the person do it? (c) What should he have done?

4. Would the "average young person" break a law which forbids (a) driving an automobile more than thirty miles an hour; (b) the sale and use of liquor; (c) the smoking of cigarettes on school property; (d) the theft of anything whatever? For example, would the "average" student steal a book from another person? an automobile? a towel from a hotel room when he is "on the road" with the team?

5. Are all of these equally important? Consider the following statements: (a) It is just as bad to steal a towel as an automobile. (b) There's no harm in taking a towel from a hotel; lots of people do it; it's just a harmless prank; the hotel makes plenty off of us anyway. (c) Young people are conscientious in big matters, but they don't see any harm in violating a little rule now and then. (d) "It's the little things that count." A person who will break a little rule will almost surely break a bigger one when he is tempted.

6. Consider the following items: (a) "Men obey laws they think right. Why obey laws they think wrong? If they had, Magna Charta and the Declaration would today be no more than historical protests of a futile medieval serfdom. I see no more reason why I should support a law I deem wrong than a creed I deem false."¹ (Discuss: What is the difference between the refusal of the American colonies to pay the stamp tax, and that of a citizen to drive his automobile down the right side of the street if he prefers to drive down the left? Consider the last sentence in the quotation; how would you refute it? What about the following? A man doesn't have to belong to a church with a creed; he is born with a state, and he is under obligations to obey all its laws as long as he stays within its boundaries.)

(b) "What would be the condition of this country in a single fortnight if every law displeasing to a considerable number of people were disregarded, some disregarding one and some another?

¹ Letter in *Collier's*, November 14, 1925.

Whose home would be safe? Whose happiness would be secure?"¹

(c) "I have three children, two girls twelve and thirteen, and a boy fourteen. My problem is keeping them in at night. It is one continual fuss about going to picture shows. I think once a week is enough for children to go. How can I make my children see I am doing the right thing and that they are not being abused?"² How do you think that these home difficulties ought to be solved?

7. Read Ex. 20: 1-18. The girls at Simmons College were asked to list the Ten Commandments "in the order" of their importance as "guides to conduct." The result was that they put them in this order; honoring parents, having only one God, not killing, not committing adultery, not stealing, not bearing false witness, not taking the name of God in vain, not making images, not coveting, keeping the Sabbath holy.³ Do you think that this is the order in which they should be listed? Do you disagree decidedly with this order, or should you say that they are all equally important?

8. Suppose young people really obeyed the commandment regarding parents, what would happen? Give specific illustrations.

Concluding the Meeting

The leader, adult counselor, teacher or pastor may summarize the conclusions you have reached. He may suggest points which are still unsettled and which may be discussed at a future meeting. Such ideas as the following may be emphasized: (1) The main thing is the spirit of loyalty to God and our fellow men. (2) The person who has that will be anxious to do the right thing, and will not be seeking any freedom which hurts another. (3) Experience has proved that the Ten Commandments are the necessary basis for social living. (4) It is important to watch our small temptations, for laxity here is likely to lead to serious violations of law later. (5) Law observance is a matter for which young people, as well as adults, are responsible. Our attitude toward rules and laws helps to make a strong and happy nation or a weak and immoral nation.

¹ Senator William E. Borah.

² Letter to *The Chicago Daily News*, February 15, 1927.

³ *The Congregationalist*, 112: 197.

Sunday

WHAT ARE THE WISEST WAYS OF USING SUNDAY?

Preparing for the Meeting

Make the following assignments: (1) Ask two young people to be prepared to talk three minutes each on the question, Should Sunday be different from other days? (2) Ask a committee of three to bring in a time schedule for Sunday, which will show when a young person should get up, what kinds of activities should fill his day, how much time should be given to church, etc.

THE MEETING

The Leader's Approach. The purpose is not to criticize one another's practices or to make rules which shall apply to every one; what is desired is a frank discussion of the reasons for observing Sunday, and of ways in which young people may develop the most wholesome Sunday habits.

NOTE: Be careful to discuss what *you ought to do*. Avoid all discussion which simply defends *what you are doing*.

The Discussion

1. Have the two talks on Should Sunday be different from other days? Follow this with general discussion which raises problems like these: (a) Why do we have a "day of rest"? Because the Bible commands it? Because of custom? Because it is necessary for health? (b) Would any in your group favor repealing the laws which have to do with Sunday? What laws do you have in your state? What do you think would happen if there were no laws regulating our life on Sunday? (c) Would you favor passing more laws regulating Sunday? If so, what kind? Would you compel all people to go to church once? Close all theatres? Close confectionery stores? Forbid the sale of newspapers?

2. Refer to section 7 in the chapter on "Laws." Why did the Simmons College girls think that the commandment regarding the Sabbath was the least important one? ("The Sabbath," as referred to in Ex. 20: 8, meant Saturday. The Christians, after the resurrection of Jesus, made Sunday their day of rest. Christians, generally, observe Sunday as their "Sabbath." The Simmons girls doubtless had Sunday in mind when they voted that "Sabbath observance" was the least important of the commandments.)

Were the college girls wise or mistaken in placing so little emphasis on this matter? Consider the following explanations: (a) These girls don't "observe Sunday" themselves, and so they were just trying to excuse themselves. (b) They had a wrong idea of what the commandment means; they thought it was a "joy-killer." (c) They didn't mean that it is unimportant, what one does on Sunday; they just considered the other items to be very important, and something had to come last in the list. (d) They thought it really didn't matter what one does on Sunday. (e) Would your group put it higher in the list? If so, where?

3. Read Ex. 20: 8. What is meant by "holy"? Let the leader be prepared to read the definitions of holy given in a complete dictionary. Which seems to you the best? Has the word always frightened or bothered you? Take such a definition as the one which gives the idea of "a thing apart, separate"; i. e., making Sunday a "different kind of day." Is that the only way in which Sunday should be holy?

4. Discuss the committee's report on a time schedule for Sunday. This will involve such points as the following: (a) How long should we sleep? (b) What kind of work is permissible? (c) How many times should we go to church? (d) How combine rest, happiness and religion?

5. Decide: What should Sunday do for a person? Discuss each answer; such as, (a) give us rest; (b) make us better morally; (c) keep us out of mischief or away from bad practices; (d) give us a better disposition; (e) add to our knowledge and make us appreciate good literature and music; (f) increase our friendships; (g) make us appreciate our homes more.

6. Do young people from Christian homes take enough interest in church on Sunday? (a) How much time should they

spend at church? (b) Which service is most worth while for them? (c) If a person can go only once, which service should he select? (d) Is it true that a Christian young person will not make any engagement on Sunday that will interfere with his regular church appointments?

7. Should the young people's Sunday evening meeting have any social feature, or should it be strictly "spiritual"? (a) A deacon says, "I don't believe in refreshments in the church on Sunday." Why doesn't he? Do you? (b) A pastor feels that "movies" fill a real need and wishes that churches would use them on Sunday. (c) Another pastor says that unless the church provides social opportunities on Sunday nights, young people will engage in harmful practices. Is that true, or is he unduly fearful? Do young people spend Sunday nights more wisely than other nights of the week? (d) In your community is there need of the church's making such provision as the following on Sunday: "Teach them how to entertain their beaux—beaux who are without money, without poise, and without words, but who long, like the rest of us, for beauty and romance. Teach them fifty-seven varieties of entertainment—by twos, by threes, and by roomfuls. Teach them how it can be done with more words and less 'hugging.' For they need to know."¹

8. Discuss ways of making Sunday happy and useful: (a) Taking a nap. (b) Hiking. (c) Making it a "home day"—good music, books, making candy, etc. (d) Inviting friends in; going in turn to their homes. (e) Catching up with work, studying. Is this a bad habit to develop? Why? (f) Writing letters. (g) Attending movies or other commercial entertainments. Discuss this frankly.

9. Discuss the following rule: Whatever one does on Sunday, he should try not to make any one else work. What about (a) taking a trip which might as well be taken on Monday? (b) going to an amusement park? (c) buying ice cream sodas on Sunday?

Concluding the Meeting

In summing up the discussion emphasize certain facts which young people frequently ignore, such as these: (a) Whatever our

¹ Mrs. Eleanor Wembridge, *Other People's Daughters*, p. 70. Copyright Houghton Mifflin Company. Used by permission.

individual practice may be, we should think out clearly what our duty is. (b) When we have reached convictions regarding the use of Sunday we should "stick to them." (c) We should be careful that Sunday becomes what it is intended to be—a day which brings us in closer touch with God, and which makes us more helpful to our fellow men.

Why The Church?

WHAT HAS THE CHURCH TO OFFER YOUNG PEOPLE

Preparing for the Meeting

Beginning at least two weeks in advance, the leader and a committee of two others should make a careful study (1) of every item in your church's program for this year; (2) of definite ways in which this program helps young people; (3) of points at which it needs the special help of young people. The same committee, or another, should make an equally careful list (1) of ways in which young people think the church should help them; (2) of special needs which they feel the church is not meeting; (3) of steps which should be taken to secure better cooperation between the older and the younger people.

THE MEETING

The Leader's Approach. It may be pointed out that (1) this discussion should be frank and friendly; (2) the plan is to get a clear idea of what the church is actually doing; (3) you desire also to find the weak spots in the church, if there are any; (4) you want to rally the young people to the program of the church (if it deserves it) both for their own sakes and for the sake of the church.

Discussion

1. Begin with the report of the committee on the present program of the church. This may be outlined on the blackboard before the meeting. On the other side of the board, the second part of the report may be summarized—that dealing with the ideas of young people about the church. If careful preparation has been made, the whole hour's discussion will center around these reports; there will be need of no further materials.

2. If this study has not been made in advance, try to secure the same results from those present at the meeting, although this will be much less satisfactory, for they will probably not know all the plans that the church has under way. The following items, however, will almost surely be included:

(a) *It provides a social program.* Is this needed? Do you have too much social life, anyway? Is the church's social program as good as that to be found outside? In what ways does it need improvement? If the social side were the main item in the church's work, would it pay to keep the churches going?

(b) *It gives information concerning moral problems.* What are the problems that bother young people most? Make a list of at least half a dozen. Then see just how the church is helping to meet these needs. One society did this and discovered that the most troublesome problem was that of the right relationships between boys and girls. How has the church helped at this point—in the Sunday school, the society, the sermons, etc.? If it is not meeting your needs, make some definite suggestion for the future; e. g., a question box, into which definite questions will be placed (unsigned), to be answered by a competent adult or discussed the next week. How effective should you say the church is in helping to solve moral problems of youth—100 per cent, 80 per cent, 50 per cent, 25 per cent?

(c) *It sets high ideals.* What are some of them? Are they higher than those set by any other agency? Suppose the churches in your town were to close; would the newspapers, schools, lodges, merchants, etc., keep high ideals before you as well as the churches do?

(d) *It helps through worship.* Do young people feel the need of public praise, prayer, reading of Scripture, etc? What does it do for them? Have a summer conference delegate tell whether the worship at this gathering was an important item. How does the worship in your church compare with it? If it is not as helpful, appoint a committee to study the reasons, and to plan for new features which will give more help at this point.

(e) *It gives us a chance to share in great tasks.* In what ways is the work of the church "big business"? Find out from the pastor or trustees exactly what they would like to have the young people do during the next three months. Study these suggestions, and come to definite conclusions.

3. The following may be read and discussed: (a) The church is one of the very best places to spend Sunday. It will help a person to be more charitable to all kinds of people, especially those with whom he disagrees. The church is a great force for helping people to think and act according to the highest principles. The person who joins the church will ally himself with an institution which has done more than any other to make the world Christian. (b) The task of the church includes "the work of serving as the great dynamo for injecting into human society the sense of social responsibility, the spirit of altruism, of service, of brotherly love, of Christ-likeness, and eliminating as far as possible the spirit of greed and self-seeking."¹ (c) Eph. 4: 1-6, 11-16; Matt. 16: 15-23; Acts 4: 1-20; 7: 54-60; 8: 1; 9: 1, 20-25; 14: 5-7; 14: 19f; 2 Cor. 11: 23-27; Matt. 5: 20; 1 Cor. 12: 12-27. (d) "The church is yours. It does not belong to staid old people, as so often on a Sunday morning it seems to do. The apostolic church was made up of young people. No one else had the sheer courage to belong to it. Straight through its history the church has been the possession of the young in heart—in romance, in adventure, in promise, in vision. Have you the courage to belong to it?"

Concluding the Meeting

The leader, teacher, or counselor may conclude by emphasizing such points as these: (1) The church is not perfect, but no other institution is trying harder to become perfect. (2) It is the central agency which is trying to carry on Jesus' work in the world. (3) Whether it grows more useful or more useless depends upon how much the young people are willing to put into it. (4) The greatest thing which it offers young people is a task: that of making strong characters and a more perfect church.

¹ R. A. Millikan, *Science and Life*, p. 42. (Copyright The Pilgrim Press.)

Money

HOW WISELY DO WE USE MONEY?

Preparing for the Meeting

Set some person who is in school to work to make estimates of (1) how much it costs parents to provide shelter, food, clothing, and ordinary expenses for a student each week; and (2) how long it would take him to "earn his keep"? Let a person who is out of school and is earning his living follow with an account of whether it is hard or easy to "make ends meet." Ask three girls and three boys to keep for a week a record of how much they spend for luxuries (ice cream, "movies," etc.).

THE MEETING

The Leader's Approach. Call attention to these facts: (1) Many of us take what money we can get without realizing how much we use. (2) Most of us are hard to satisfy and always want more. (3) We are "dependents." (4) Some day we are going to be thrown on our own resources. Unless we learn now to use money wisely, we shall have difficulty later. (5) The use of money is a moral problem as well as a business matter.

Discussion

1. Begin with the reports suggested in the first paragraph above. Whose money is it that we use? In what sense can it be called "our" money? Do we get more than a fair share of the family income? When we get new clothes, does it sometimes mean that a parent goes without something that he wants?

2. How much is it right for young people in your community to spend each day for ice cream and similar "extras"? Mr. Andrews earns forty dollars a week. He has three children in the 'teens. Rent costs forty dollars a month. In the light of the figures already considered, put down how much it costs for the

clothes and food of these three children. Then, figure how much the three should have for "extras." How much is left for clothes, savings, insurance and other adult expenses? How much do you think the children really are entitled to in this case?

3. In the Fletcher family every one receives a fixed share of the income. If any member runs out of money before the month is over, he must either go without money for the rest of the period or borrow from some one else. They have found that they spend much less money this way. It has been good discipline for them. Would young people be glad to follow this kind of plan? Make out a sample budget for young people. How much should they be allowed? For what expenses should they be responsible (clothes, books, etc.)?

4. Suppose a boy starts in earning ten dollars a week. How much of this should he plan to save? Two brothers began savings accounts. At the end of the year one of them had only half of what he intended to have; his explanation was, "I just never seemed to have any left." The other had saved exactly the sum that he had planned; "I always put my savings in the bank on the day that I received my salary check." How important is it that we hold to our resolution in a matter like this?

5. Maud was one of a group of girls who did things together. In order to share in a party she borrowed five dollars from the young people's society of which she was treasurer. She never seemed to have enough money to pay it back. She never told any one about it, and apparently nobody knows of it now. Was it all right to borrow in an emergency? Should she have told some one? If so, in whom should she have confided? How serious a matter is it that she didn't pay it back?

6. Study the following passages and discuss their meaning in relation to this topic: Eccl. 5:10-12; Matt. 6:19-21; Mark 8:36; 1 Cor. 10:31.

7. Robert seldom goes out with the girls although he is very popular. The reason is that he doesn't have much money and he is putting away a large part of his earnings so as to be able to go to college. He says that girls expect the fellows to spend too much: "They don't want to walk home from a party; they always want good seats at a show; they expect you to buy ice cream and they always order expensive dishes." The girls hear about this remark and discuss it. The following state-

ments are made: (a) "Well, a girl has a right to expect a fellow to 'set 'em up' to her after a show." (b) "It isn't right for us to order dishes that cost thirty cents when a fifteen-cent one would be just as good." (c) "He's a 'cheap skate.' He'll never get a girl to 'fall for him' unless he spends something on her." (d) "I think it would be better if we girls insisted on 'making it Dutch.' It would be better all around for girls to pay their own bills when they have 'dates.'" Let the boys discuss the points raised; follow this with a general frank and good-natured consideration by all the members. Should high school boys pay for girls' expenses when they go out together? Why? What is a reasonable amount to spend on an evening "date"? Make these answers in the light of the amount of money you earn, the amount your parents have to spare, how much you really need and spend for necessities, how much you give to the church.

8. How much should young people give to the church? As much as they spend on "movies"? Why? Should they have a regular method of giving it, or should they give it "when they have it"? Figure out how much money your society or young people's organization would have if each gave as much as he spends on amusements each week. Plan a definite budget, and after each member has had time to think the whole matter over, arrange to secure personal gifts or pledges.

9. The question was asked in three Pittsburgh high schools, "What would you do with \$10,000 if you had it?" The girls' answers showed that 28% would invest it; 27% would "spend it on self," either selfishly or worthily; 19% would help others; 13% would spend some and save some; 13% did not know. Of the boys, 45% would invest it; 28% would spend it on self; 5% would help others; 7% would spend some and save some; 15% did not know.¹ Your group may discuss this, but it will be better to choose a definite small sum; for instance, how shall we spend two dollars a week?

Concluding the Meeting

Summarize with such points as these: (1) Most young people are using money which they have not earned. (2) It is easy to be wasteful and perhaps most of us are. (3) Unless one de-

¹ From *The Youth of America*, by Daniel L. Marsh. Copyright 1923. Used by permission of The Methodist Book Concern.

velops business habits when young, unnecessary hardship is likely to be experienced later. (4) The use of money is an important moral problem. (5) By careless or thoughtless spending, we are likely to cause sacrifice on the part of others.

Peace and War

WHAT CAN YOUNG PEOPLE DO ABOUT WAR?

Preparing for the Meeting

A committee of three to five may prepare for the meeting or series of meetings dealing with this general subject. Three persons may be responsible for leading the three main discussions suggested below. Definite assignments should be made to others in advance.

THE MEETING

Discussion

1. *War as a Serious Moral Problem.*

(a) Study the chief evils; such as, destruction of property, ruin of great treasures, suffering caused to innocent people, the failure of war to solve the problems for which it is fought, the spirit of hatred that "makes beasts of us all."

(b) Unless this generation gets rid of war, more violent methods of destruction will be found; whole nations will be wiped out by explosives dropped from the air. If this generation is going to do away with war, when are we going to begin to study the method of solution: now, or when we become adults?

2. *The Christian's Hatred of War.*

(a) People of other religions accuse Christians of not being true to Jesus because we have so many wars. "Alas! Christendom seems to many to be expressing itself more by gunboats and armies than by gentleness and forgiveness."¹ What attitude do you think Jesus would take toward our armies and navies? Would he enlist, condemn them, ignore them, or teach that we must trust more to faith and generosity than to force? Can you imagine Jesus in a soldier's uniform? If not, is it any more allowable for a follower of Jesus to wear one? (Discuss

¹ "Call for a Forward Movement by the Christian Church in China," in *The Congregationalist*, 110:171.

this frankly, trying to understand each other's viewpoints in a sympathetic spirit.)

(b) Most Christians agree that we should try to get rid of war, that it is a Christian duty. Do any of your group think that it is not a Christian's duty to do what he can to bring in permanent peace?

(c) Disagreement comes over such questions as these: Should a Christian refuse to fight? Is war sometimes a "melancholy necessity"?¹ Study the following passages: Matt. 5:9, 38-48; Matt. 6:12, 14, 15; Matt. 18:21-35; Luke 2:8-14; Luke 10:25-37. Try to understand the *spirit* of Jesus as well as the actual words. How should we make up our minds about what Jesus intended that we should do: by taking a single sentence and basing our ideas on that, or by guiding our lives according to the general spirit of his own life?

3. *What Is It Possible for Young People to Do About War?*

(a) *Study the causes of war*, its evils, and the proposed methods of getting rid of it. This will mean more than a half-hour's discussion once a year. In a summer conference, several young people objected to discussing war, saying (I) "We don't know anything about it." (When and how can we learn?) (II) "We hear so much about it, we're tired of the subject." (What have you done about it? Has all this "hearing about it" resulted in any determination or action?) (III) "It's something we can't do anything about. It's 'up to the adults.'" (In order to face it properly when we are adults, what preparation must we make now?)

Some members of a patriotic organization objected to allowing church young people to discuss war: "They don't know anything about it. They will just get all stirred up and probably become disloyal to the government and its policies." Is war a "safe" question for young people to tackle? If they discuss it, what precautions do they need to take?

(b) *Have faith that the world can be improved.* Seventy-five years ago, most people said, "You can't get rid of slavery." Consider the following points: There are "seven devils" or untruths that we must not believe—"Man is a fighting animal." (Is that all he is?) "You can't change human nature." (Then

¹ S. Parkes Cadman, quoted in *The Christian Century*, May 6, 1926.

why have schools and churches?) * "War is inevitable." (Over against this argument put the following answer: "The militarists' theory, that war is inevitable and that those who spend themselves trying to eradicate it from human society are blinded idealists, is absolutely untenable. Who knows whether a specific existing evil in human society can be eradicated until all the energies of mankind have been fully brought to bear on it?"¹ (How hard is America trying to get rid of war?) "In time of peace prepare for war." (Why not "in time of peace prepare for peace"? "God is on the side of the strongest battalion." (Do you believe this, or do you believe that God is on the side of righteousness and that usually there is little righteousness on either side of a war?) "The navy is only a police force." (Are both army and navy means by which nations are kept suspicious and fearful of each other? On the other hand, is it not necessary to keep some kind of army and navy? How can we keep them from getting too powerful?) "The church must keep her hands off of national and international problems."² (What do you think of this argument?)

(c) *Not let military propaganda, parades, and demonstrations carry them off their feet.* Is it true that girls help to keep war alive by "falling in love with a soldier's uniform, and being crazy about military balls"?

(d) *Honor heroes of peace more than heroes of war.* Compare the usefulness of Edison with that of an army general; of Hoover with a Secretary of War. A school bore the name of an educator who had spent his life in building up the local school system. When the schoolhouse was to be torn down in order to make way for a larger building, a soldiers' organization insisted that his name be dropped and that of a lieutenant (who had nothing to do with the schools) be substituted. Why should schools be named after military men?

(e) *Love their country without hating any other.* What are some of the results of using such words as "hunks," "wops," "sheenies"?

(f) *Learn to solve their own problems in peaceful ways.* The "war spirit" shows itself in fights between fraternities, between cliques in high school, between factions in the church, be-

1 D. S. Robinson, in *The God of the Liberal Christian*, p. 170. Copyright D. Appleton and Company, New York. Used by permission.

2 Charles E. Jefferson, quoted in *The Christian Century*.

tween members of a family. *Someone has said, "You can't get nations to live peacefully until you get members of families to live peacefully." Is this true? Just what is the relation between peace in the home and peace in the world?

Tolerance

HOW TOLERANT SHOULD WE BE?

Preparing for the Meeting

Ask three persons to be ready to start the discussions indicated under the main headings below.

THE MEETING

The Leader's Approach. Cite examples of intolerance; the bitter attitude of some "liberals" and "fundamentalists" toward each other; the quarrels at school because each person insists upon his own viewpoints. Point out two dangers: (1) that of being so intolerant that we cannot understand the other person's viewpoint; (2) that of being so "broad-minded" that we have no convictions of our own. The problem is how to be sympathetic toward other viewpoints and ways of living and still strive for the principles in which we believe.

Discussion

1. *Being Tolerant of the Opinions of Others.*

(a) In a high school class of twenty are Ben, Charles, and two Negroes. Charles has been brought up to believe that white people should have no social relations with Negroes; Ben has been taught that the races should have equal privileges and he has been a close friend to the Negroes. Charles and Ben are constantly quarreling over this matter. They argue bitterly by the hour. Should they "agree to disagree" and be friends? Should Ben "give up" and let Charles think that he has won the argument? Is it Ben's business, as a Christian, to keep on trying to convince Charles?

(b) What do you think of the following statement? "Those with deepest convictions are always respectful to every other form of sincerity and loyalty."¹ Does the case of Ben

¹ F. J. Kinsman, *The Forum*, 73: 672.

and Charles bear this out, or would you say that these boys had no real "convictions"? One boy accused both of them of simply having "prejudices" instead of convictions. (I) How does a person arrive at a real conviction or principle? (He must think for himself; arrive at his own conclusions; his reason must consent.) (II) Webster's Dictionary defines a prejudice as "An opinion or judgment formed beforehand or without examination." Is that what both Charles and Ben had? (III) Is it true that people who have prejudices are very intolerant, while those who have really reasoned out their conviction are tolerant? (IV) When Charles and Ben argue, they try to outdo each other, instead of attempting to learn from each other. Is that right? (v) What would happen if each tried hard to see the other's viewpoint? Would they become tolerant and be real friends?

(c) Discuss the value of such statements as these: "It is always safe to learn, even from our enemies." "To know all is to forgive all." "Grant to others as much leeway as you ask for yourself."

2. *Being Tolerant of the Actions of Others.*

(a) Olive shocked her crowd by smoking cigarettes. The rest of the girls feel that it is below the dignity of respectable girls to smoke. One girl says, "Let's just overlook it and be good pals with her"; another insists, "We're going to tell her that she has to 'cut them out' if she wants to run with us. We can't have our reputation ruined by going with her." Which is right?

(b) Olive was considered a likely candidate for the presidency of the young people's society for next year. After she smoked, the following statements were made: (I) "That's the end of her chance. Let's take her name off the roll"; (II) "No, don't take her name off, but let's not consider her for the presidency"; (III) "Let's tell her that she must quit for the sake of her influence on others"; (IV) "Let's reason with her about it, and try to understand why she does it. Maybe we can persuade her to give it up."

(c) When Olive was approached she was perfectly calm, arguing thus: (I) Women have as much right to smoke as men. (II) My conscience doesn't hurt me and it is my guide. (III) It's as much a matter of principle with me as your viewpoint is with you. I respect your opinions and you should respect mine.

(How would you answer these statements? Do you think there is any real "principle" in what she is doing, or is she only doing it to get a thrill?)

(d) What do the following passages have to do with a matter like this: 1 Cor. 6: 12a; Rom. 15: 1.

3. *Being Tolerant of Others' Religion.*

(a) In a certain school there were girls of all beliefs; liberals, conservatives, Catholics, Christian Scientists, Jews, etc. They discussed religion with a good temper. One day a girl entered who boasted that she didn't believe in God. These viewpoints were expressed: (I) "She has as much right to her view as we have, and I respect her for it." (II) "A person can't be an atheist and be a safe moral person. We ought to be careful how friendly we become with her." (III) "We Christians ought to try to convert her." (IV) "Let's be friendly. Maybe she has something to teach us. If we are willing to learn from her, maybe she will learn from us." What about it?

(b) Because Christians "love their fellows so well" they try to convert all "pagans" and so "meanness" and "lack of understanding are typical traits of the Christian."¹ In line with this statement some people argue: "Why not leave the Mohammedans alone? We ought not to try to convert people of other religions." (I) What does the Bible say? (Mark 16: 15.) (II) What reasons can you give for trying to make Christians of Mohammedans? (III) As we are trying to convert Mohammedans, should we look down upon them with pity, or with scorn; or should we respect their religion, being ready to learn from it, hoping also that they will see something better in Christianity than in what they have?

Concluding the Meeting

Out of a discussion of the cases given above, find certain principles that are worth following. Consider such statements as the following: (1) Never despise a person no matter what his ideas are. (2) Try to understand every opinion and way of living that differs from yours. (3) Strive to find the defects of your own ideas and principles. (4) Never sacrifice a principle in which you strongly believe. (5) Never try to compel another

¹ Hermann Keyserling, *The Travel Diary of a Philosopher*, 1: 51ff. Copyright, Harcourt Brace. Used by permission.

person to sacrifice a principle in which he firmly believes. (6)
Try always to substitute better ideas and principles for poor ones
—both in yourself and in others.

Being a Leader

HOW CAN WE BECOME EFFECTIVE LEADERS?

Preparing for the Meeting

Ask a number of persons to be prepared on the following questions: (1) Who are the three greatest leaders in American history? Why do they deserve to be called great leaders? (2) Pick out one or two of the outstanding leaders in your school or town. What are the points that make them strong leaders? (3) Be prepared to tell the main points in the following passages; what qualities of leadership are shown? Gal. 1:15-24; Josh. 1:1-11; Acts 5:27-32.

THE MEETING

The Leader's Approach. He may point out that three main ideas may be considered in the meeting: (1) What has made other people strong leaders? (2) Is it possible for everyone to become a leader, and ought all of us try to be leaders? (3) What are some of the ways by which we may develop our powers of leadership?

The Discussion

1. Have the reports on the three points suggested under "Preparing for the Meeting." Put on the blackboard all the points named by the speakers. Ask the whole group to add other facts which are true of the persons who have been discussed.

2. You will have anywhere from a dozen to three dozen different qualities listed. Now find out which of these are most important. Divide the list into two sections: (a) Qualities which every leader must possess; (b) those which are valuable, but not absolutely necessary. Under each of these two headings, list the qualities in the order of their importance. For example,

suppose you have named the following qualities, among others: tact, sincerity, courage, education, physical strength. Does education belong in the first list or the second? If it belongs in the first (or second) should it head the list, be third, or at the bottom?

3. You may want to spend a number of weeks discussing all the qualities named. If you want to devote only one or two weeks to it, select the two or three most important qualities and decide the following questions about each: (a) Is this a quality which is possible for all of us? (b) If so, what are the ways by which we may develop it?

4. Suppose you want to discuss courage. Ask questions like these: Are some of us "born cowards"? How can a person overcome cowardice? Consider such helps as the following (discuss both the "pros" and "cons" of each): (a) Reading biographies of strong men. Whose? Lincoln, Roosevelt? Who else? (b) Reading stories of adventure. (c) Keeping in the company of courageous people. (d) Getting interested in a great cause, developing such a love for it that one will grow bold for it. (e) Seizing every opportunity of developing confidence in oneself; taking part in every meeting; getting into athletics; tackling hard tasks.

5. The following statements may be discussed: (a) "Leadership is not true leadership that draws people to the leader only. It must draw them past the leader to the cause."¹ Do you think of any leader who was truly great who interested people in himself alone? Jesus, Lincoln, Alexander the Great?

(b) Students are "taught to stand behind the team. It isn't until" they graduate that they "learn to stand in front of something."² Is that true? Does school help the "average student" to become a leader, or does it simply make the most of us follow the few "natural leaders"? Should a student be allowed to accept only one important office, so that the rest of them would be divided, giving more students a chance to try their hands at leadership?

(c) Students are, like the rest of us, mass thinkers. They "think by infection, catch opinions like a cold."³ Where do young people get their ideas—from parents, teachers, newspapers,

¹ H. E. Fosdick, in *The Congregationalist*, 110: 331.

² Heywood Broun.

³ Cyril Harris, *The Religion of Undergraduates*, p. 10.

or do they do their own thinking? One writer complains that students insist on doing their own thinking; another laments that they are too lazy or too dull to take any leadership in original thinking. Which is right?

(d) A certain governor is a popular hero. The reason given by a magazine writer is that he "decides first whether a step is desirable; then the best method of taking it; finally how to convert the public."¹ If a person followed these three plans, would he have everything that is necessary for leadership?

(e) Must a leader be successful in order to be called great? Can a person fail and still be a true leader? Did Jesus succeed or fail? Lincoln? Wilson? How true is the following: "First, he must see farther than the body of the people. Secondly, he must not go so far ahead of the people as to lose their confidence and support."²

6. Can every one be a leader? Consider such answers as these: (a) Every one should aspire to lead. Otherwise, a person loses courage and grows more and more useless. (b) A good follower is as important as a good leader; therefore, some of us will do better to choose our leader and be true to him. (c) Not all of us can be great leaders, but we ought all to think for ourselves and be ready to fill less important places of leadership. (d) All of us must be both good leaders and good followers.

Concluding the Meeting

The leader, teacher, adult counselor, or pastor may summarize the conclusions which have been reached. He may call attention to an important point which may or may not have come out in the discussion; most leaders, when they have great responsibility, find that they need help from God; for example, Moses, Jesus in his wilderness temptations and in the Garden of Gethsemane, Lincoln in prayer with his cabinet, Coolidge upon becoming President. Emphasize the importance of seeking such help each day, of not waiting until we are in serious difficulty, and of taking Jesus as our own leader.

¹ Norman Hapgood, *The Nation*, 124: 165.

² W. E. Barton, *Liberty*, February 12, 1927.

Why Missions?

WHY DOES THE CHURCH MAINTAIN MISSIONS?

Preparing for the Meeting

The missionary committee or a special committee may be in charge of this discussion. Study: (1) Has our own church ever received missionary aid—for pastor's salary, for the erection of the church or parsonage? If so, for how many years? How much? Why? From what agency? (2) The denominational boards will supply you with free literature. Study it. (3) The denominational magazines and undenominational missionary papers will give much assistance. (4) Make out a statement of what "missions" includes: foreign work of many kinds, starting and helping to maintain churches in America, helping to build parsonages and churches, assisting old and sick ministers, developing the young people's work, maintaining work among students, etc. All these items and others are included in the "benevolence program," which is the modern missionary enterprise.

THE MEETING

The Leader's Approach. You may decide to discuss only one phase of missions; e. g., foreign missions, medical missions, work among foreigners in America. Otherwise call attention to the wider meaning of missions as suggested in the preceding paragraph. In many denominations each local church is asked to give a definite amount each year to the total work of missions; this is their "apportionment." If you have one, tell what it is, why it is what it is, and what the money is for. Then consider details, as suggested below.

The Discussion

Consider these examples of various kinds of benevolent work:

1. A minister served thirty years in hard but important little churches, in mining camps and small factory districts. He never had a salary of more than \$1,200. At seventy years of age he was unable to take another church; he had been unable to save enough to keep himself and his wife after his years of service were over. The Ministerial Boards wanted to give him \$500 a year for the rest of his life. Did the church owe him this? Who should pay it?

2. In some parts of the Orient people are superstitious; terrible diseases kill hundreds of thousands. These people are able to learn; many of them are eager for a better religion and a higher civilization. They need teachers, physicians, preachers, nurses. The Foreign Board tries to supply these. Is this "any of our business"? Does the story of the Good Samaritan have any application here?

3. Many students in universities are puzzled as to what they can believe. It is said that in some colleges half of the students are not sure that they can believe in God. Hundreds are seriously tempted to engage in immoral practices. Many are lonesome and need good friends. Churches near the campuses are trying to help students face these problems in a Christian way. The students come from all over the country, from your church and mine. The minister in the college town cannot take care of his own church and the students, too, without help. Should your church be interested in helping to maintain a strong church at your state university? If so, why?

4. A copper mine has opened. The life of the miners in this new town is very dull; they need real friends and good fun as well as religion. There are also fifty college graduates there—skilled workers. There is no church. The people want one, but they can raise only \$1,500. In order to do a high grade piece of work, there must be a budget of \$3,000. What shall be done? Shall they get a poorly trained preacher who is interested only in "saving them from hell," or shall they try to get help from the outside so as to get a man who will build up a good program of instruction, recreation, and intelligent worship? To whom shall they look for help? Whose business is it to help?

5. In a crowded section of a city are hundreds of "foreign families." Children are eager to go to Sunday School, they want to be Scouts, there is need of a recreation room; but there is

nothing but a little frame building which cannot meet their needs. They must have a parish house, a social center. After a few years they will be able to pay back the money that is put into such a building, but some agency must lend them a few thousand dollars at this critical moment. Is this a part of the business of the church—of your church and mine?

6. In the light of such cases, decide just what you think the church's duty is with reference to the "benevolence program," or to missions in general.

7. What answer will you make to such statements as the following: (a) "Let them take care of themselves. We've always had to do it." (b) "Let the rich people help. We're poor and we ought not to take any money out of our budget for others when we need it in our own church." (c) "I don't believe in foreign missions. Make America Christian first. Then, other nations will have more respect for our religion." (d) "We need to do both things at once: make ourselves Christian and make others Christian, too." (e) "I don't believe in having any 'overhead organization' that tells us what we ought to do. If we want to help some other group, let's do what we want to about it, but don't take orders from any Board. We don't need all these Boards."

8. Consider the meaning of the following Bible passages as related to this topic: Matt. 10:5-23; Mark 16:20; Luke 10:1-17.

After the Discussion

It is impossible to deal adequately with this set of problems in one meeting. This discussion should be an introduction to a series of studies or projects: (1) A mission study class covering six weeks or more, in which some one phase of missionary work will be studied in detail. (2) A careful study of what your church is expected to do for the denominational or interdenominational program. (3) A study of certain definite missionary fields, which may be followed by accepting responsibility for some specific piece of work; e. g., paying the tuition of some foreign student in school. (4) Planning definite items in your next year's program, so that your missionary program will really "get somewhere." (5) Making a missionary budget and planning how it shall be raised and used. These tasks may be assigned to the missionary, executive or a special committee for report at a specific future date.

Being a Christian

IN WHAT RESPECTS IS A CHRISTIAN DIFFERENT FROM A NON-CHRISTIAN?

Preparing for the Meeting

If your library has a copy of *Collier's* for February 19, 1927, read, "Why I became a Christian." Mark certain parts of it, and use it as the introduction to the discussion.

THE MEETING

The Leader's Approach. The account just referred to was written by a Confucianist. He saw a missionary (M. E. South) in quiet prayer; this was his first contact with him. Then he heard him preach. Then he found that this man enjoyed a joke. "It must be a jolly religion," he said. He next wondered at the great love this missionary had for children. Next, he discovered that the Christian had a high respect for the religious beliefs of non-Christians. A warm admiration for the man developed. Finally he went to the missionary, saying that he wanted to become a Christian "because my life doesn't mean anything. Yours does. If you can live like Jesus, maybe I might try to live as much like him as I can. I might as well tell you, I've fallen in love with you—your character and your work."¹

The Discussion

1. Consider the points included in the above paragraph. Take each one separately, and tell how important it is in the Christian life; e. g., love for children.

2. Why did people become Christians in the first century? Was it because Jesus was a great preacher, a strong personality, a doer of good deeds, a prayerful man? Put down all the reasons you can think of.

¹ Adachi Kinnosuke, *Collier's*, February 19, 1927, pp. 13ff.

3. Study the reasons which appear in such passages as these: Matt. 7:24-29; Luke 19:1-10; John 11:1-45; 4:5-27; 4:46-54; Mark 12:28-37.

4. Suppose you were going to tell a Mohammedan what it means to be a Christian, just exactly what would you include? Ask someone (in advance) to do this. Then in the meeting, let each member add anything that ought to be included, or indicate items which he thinks are not important.

The answer to the question in the topic will probably include the following main points:

1. *You can tell a Christian by the way he acts.* Is that true? Suppose you went out on the street in a strange city and were going to try to pick out the Christians. Could you do it? What would distinguish them? Ought you to be able to recognize them in this way?

(a) Are there certain sins that a Christian must not commit? What are they, if there are any? If a person commits these, can he be a Christian? (b) Are there certain positive traits that a Christian will show? What? Discuss the meaning of such passages as Phil. 4:8-9, and Eph. 6:10-20.

"At Christmas time many people act more like Christians than at any other time." Is this true? How do they show it?

A Brahmin priest and a missionary became very good friends. They came to understand each other. The Christian finally came to believe that the Brahmin was a better man than he was. But the Brahmin came to be baptized, saying: "Your religion is better than ours. . . . This Christ . . . this worker of compassionate miracles, this divine victim slain for the sins of the people, still walks across the world, a teacher and a healer."¹

Is the single test of Christianity found in Luke 6:44; James 1:22; I John 4:20?

2. *You can tell a Christian by his belief.* Is this true?

(a) Mr. Sloan says that he believes every word in the Bible and in the old creeds; he doesn't pay his clerks decent wages. (b) Mr. Shedd says that he can't believe any of the creeds; he is the most generous and helpful neighbor in the block. Are both of these Christians? Is neither one a real Christian?

Is it possible for a man to be a Christian and not believe in God? In Jesus as the Son of God? In prayer? In the kind of coming Kingdom that Jesus talked about?

¹ Oswald Couldrey, *Atlantic Monthly*, 139: 181.

Consider: (a) Men cannot act right unless they believe right. Unless a man believes in the brotherhood of man, he is not likely to act like a brother. (b) The trouble with most of us is that we act quickly, without having thought out any fundamental life philosophy. We do what we want to do and then are sorry for it. We need to have genuine Christian beliefs. (c) Without deep beliefs, Jesus would never have died on the cross. Missionaries would not go abroad without them. (d) We cannot develop high loyalties without the right kind of belief. Therefore, we need to study the Bible more carefully. It is absolutely necessary if one is to know how to be a Christian.

3. *You can tell a Christian by his spirit.* If you were to live in a strange family for a week, by which of the following ways would you judge whether they were Christians: (a) Watching whether they read the Bible, (b) the tone of voice they used to each other, (c) the regularity with which they attended church, (d) the kindness or unfriendliness which they showed toward you? Are all of these important? What do we mean by the "spirit that a person shows"?

Concluding the Meeting

Attention may be called to the following ideas: (a) After all, Jesus has been the only real Christian the world has ever known. (b) Others have been trying to measure up toward his life. They, too, deserve the name Christian. (c) God judges us more by the direction in which our life is moving, than by the point we have attained. If we are trying hard to move upward, we should not worry too much about our imperfections. (d) We should be careful not to spend much time dividing people into classes, "Christian" or "not Christian." Our task is to live so that we ourselves shall measure up. (e) A Christian life is well-rounded: great faith, great convictions, courageous action, humility in prayer. (f) When we are in the "real spirit of Christmas" we come nearest to being Christians.

What Jesus Did

WHAT IS THE GREATEST THING THAT JESUS DID FOR THE WORLD?

Preparing for the Meeting

(1) Ask each of five members to come prepared to suggest one great thing that Jesus did for the world. (2) Ask five others to come prepared to answer the following: If you were asked to name ten verses in the Bible which show some of the important items in Jesus' life and teaching, what is one of the verses which you would surely include? Why?

THE MEETING

The Leader's Approach. We all take it for granted that Jesus has made changes in the world's life. But we seldom ask just exactly how he changed it. In this discussion we do not expect to find the complete answer to the question of why the world calls Jesus great, but we can sum up a few ideas that help to account for the fact that he is regarded as the greatest character of history.

The Discussion

1. Begin by calling on the persons who are prepared with replies to the first question. List the various answers that are given. Invite the whole group to add other points that have not been named. After all the original ideas have been given, the following may be read and considered.

(a) Jesus showed that God is our very good friend. Others were calling him King, Lord. Jesus knew him as Father. What difference does it make what kind of idea of God we hold? Do we prefer to have a God who is a Father rather than one who is a king? Why?

(b) He showed us the most worthwhile way of living; no one else, before or since, has been so perfect. Is it possible for

us to live as he did, or was he so perfect that we cannot hope to be very much like him? Just how different do you think he was from other people?

(c) He started civilization in a new direction. The old pagan religions were overcome. Christianity has become the leading religion. The ideals of the New Testament have become the world's hope; but have there not been as many wars since Jesus' time as during the same number of years before him? Are people not just as selfish? Has the world really grown better? Is it getting worse? In what ways is life different now from what it was in the first century? Compare life in the Roman Empire with that in the United States.

(d) Jesus gave the world a conscience. There are still many sins. But the world recognizes that they are sins. (Does it?) People are sorry for them. (Are they?) When men fight they apologize and say, "We know war is wrong, but it couldn't be helped this time." A guilty conscience is a sign of progress. This higher conscience can be traced back to Jesus.

(e) He gave us a new idea of brotherhood. He taught us to love our neighbor even when we disagree with him. He substituted the Golden Rule for vengeance. But what good is this idea? Who takes it seriously? As a matter of fact, is it really possible for us to keep the Golden Rule? If one business man is dishonest, must not all others in the community be dishonest in order to make money?

(f) He brought in an era of good will. The angel's song—good will to men—is a note of joy and hope. This has made Christianity a religion of hope, a "jolly religion," as the young Japanese said. But is it really a happy religion today? Does it give us more joy, or does it mean cutting off many good times? In exactly what ways do you think a Christian has a better time than a non-Christian; a non-Christian than a Christian; or do they both act alike?

(g) He proved by his death that there are some things worth more than life itself. He showed us what real loyalty is. He demonstrated a loyalty even greater than dying for one's country. (Is that true?) What was it that was so much worth while—to what did he give the loyalty which brought his death?

2. The Scripture passages selected by the five members may be read. In each case the reason for the selection of the verse

should be given. Others may suggest additional passages. The following paragraphs may be used if needed.

(a) Matt. 6: 33. Just exactly what would happen if you actually followed this verse? If the business men of your town did? If the Congress of the United States did?

(b) Matt. 20: 25-28. In keeping with this idea, how can we best honor Jesus? Would he want us to worship him? What else is needed besides worship?

(c) Luke 6: 46. How much do we really know about the teachings of Jesus? In order to be a good Christian must we be earnest Bible students? What would you say was necessary if a person were to become a "hundred per cent Christian"?

(d) Matt. 10: 29. Can we picture a God who knows every minute detail? Do we believe he does? What does this verse tell us about the moral character of God?

(e) Matt. 5: 44. This is not an entirely new note in the Bible, but religious people were not taking it very seriously. Is it possible to live up to it? Do you think that this is a very important part of the gospel?

(f) Luke 10: 33-38. What is the main point of this parable? Why do we value it so highly; is it not something every one would agree to? Give instances in which we should apply it. Should we "pick up" every stranger we find on the road when driving an automobile?

(g) Matt. 5: 3-13. Do you believe all of these verses? Which seems to you most important? . . . hardest to believe? . . . to practise?

(h) Matt. 6: 9-13. Why do we repeat this so often? What does it mean? Study it clause by clause.

Concluding the Meeting

The leader or teacher may summarize the main points which have been brought out in the discussion, or he may take one or two which have not been completely considered and give special emphasis to these. Whatever his method, he should seek to make clear the fact that in certain definite ways Jesus introduced powerful influences into the world.

Good Intentions

HOW TO LIVE UP TO OUR BEST INTENTIONS

Preparing for the Meeting

Assign certain main points of discussion to various members for thought and report. The leader or some reliable member should be prepared to tell the story, "The Go-Getter" (in *The Golden Book* for February, 1927), in an interesting way, placing emphasis upon the slogan, "It shall be done."

THE MEETING

The Leader's Approach. There is difference of opinion as to whether it is a good or a bad plan to make New Year's resolutions. One group says, "You never keep them, and so you become a hypocrite and are worse off morally than you were before." Another insists, "It did you some good to have high hopes and intentions; you probably lived more nobly for a little while, anyway." What does your group think about fixed times for making resolutions; such as New Year's, Rally Day, revivals, consecration meetings, the Lenten period?

Discussion

Discuss one or more of the following:

1. George went to a convention. An eloquent speaker urged every one to promise to spend fifteen minutes a day in prayer. All who would agree to make this promise were urged to stand. For ten minutes the speaker pleaded; others around George stood up; "personal workers" talked to him; finally he stood with the rest. He kept his promise faithfully for a few days, largely out of a sense of duty, but he was angry with himself for having made the promise. What was wrong with this situation? Was it not a good resolution? Should not any young person agree to do this? Was there any real reason why George should break his

promise? What do you think of his remark, "That speaker took an unfair advantage of us; he 'roped us in' "? Suppose that to be true, should George keep his resolution?

2. Sam was a hard smoker. He knew that he smoked more than was good for him. He sometimes said that he should be better off if he were to quit entirely. He resolved several times to "slow up," but made no progress. Finally he had a chance to make an athletic team. He quit smoking entirely. It seemed no hardship to him at all to do without cigarettes. As soon as the season was over, he went back to his smoking habit, without any moderation. Is this what would happen to almost any fellow? Why was it so easy for him to quit for a little while? Did that prove that a person can break a habit? Why was he unable to do without tobacco after the season was over? Does that prove that it is impossible to give up permanently a habit that has been well established? Is it as important to do without tobacco after the athletic season is over as during it? Why?

3. Alice and Jean had been doing just ordinary work in school although both were exceptionally capable girls. Both decided on January first that they were going to make their studies their main business during the rest of the year. Alice resigned all her offices, and studied hard from early morning until late at night. Jean kept several of her offices, saying that she was going "at it gradually." Which do you think acted the more wisely? Which would probably more nearly bring her good intentions to pass?

Discuss the reasons why we fail to realize our good intentions. Have the group name as many reasons as they can think of. Consider, at the same time, positive ways in which these difficulties may be overcome. After your own suggestions have been discussed, consider the following:

Laziness. It takes hard work to start a new habit. The old ones keep repeating themselves. What help do we find in Eph. 6: 10-18?

Thoughtlessness. We often forget our resolutions until we have broken them. How much are we to be excused by resorting to the remark, "I forgot"? Why did we forget? How can we avoid forgetting? Discuss the following suggestions: (a) Write out your good intention; place it in a prominent position on your

desk, in your notebook, or on your wall. (b) Prepare a brief prayer, slogan, or inspirational sentence which will be repeated frequently. (c) Do you think there was value in such a slogan as Coué introduced: "Every day, in every way, I am growing better and better"? (d) Refer to the story, "The Go-Getter," by Peter B. Kyne, in which a crippled man overcame great obstacles because he frequently said to himself, "It shall be done."¹ (e) Take a different Bible passage each week; make it the slogan for that period; repeat it morning, noon, night, at times when you are tired and in need of strength. What passages will serve this purpose? Suggest as many as you can, and then read the following, discussing their value: Phil. 3: 12-14; 4: 13; Ps. 46: 1.

Lack of help from others. Is it better to keep our good intentions to ourselves, or is it wise to tell others about them? Discuss: two girls will talk to each other about all sorts of things—good times, parents, boys, school work—but they seldom say anything about the "deeper things," or about personal moral problems. Would it be helpful if each of us had one very good friend with whom we shared all of these inner struggles?

Lack of substitutes for old practices. Discuss: (a) Jack wasted his time with cheap stories and unworthy thoughts when he was alone at night in his own room. In order to use his time to better advantage, he decided always to have handy several books of adventure stories, puzzles, cards for playing solitaire. Do you think these would help? Which would be best? Could you suggest anything better?

(b) Joe knew that he was forming bad habits by his association with the "pool hall gang" several nights a week. What would you substitute for this form of leisure? The following occurred to him: comedies at the movies, spending the evening at the library, making a radio set, trying to get a job which would keep him busy evenings. Which would you recommend for a high school sophomore? What better ones would you suggest?

Concluding the Meeting

The leader or teacher may summarize by emphasizing the following points: the value of setting goals beyond our present accomplishment; the importance of making ourselves be true to

¹ The Golden Book, February, 1927.

good resolutions; the necessity of making a plan by which we shall do what we intend to do; the value of prayer in helping us to achieve our purposes. Close with silent prayer.

For Notes

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